

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 06SANJOSE2373, POLICE DIRECTOR RESIGNS, REPLACED BY PILOT

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06SANJOSE2373**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06SANJOSE2373</a>	<a href="#">2006-10-26 18:29</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy San Jose</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-06/Investigacion/NotasDestacadas/Investigacion2702320.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-06/Investigacion/NotaPrincipal/Investigacion2702324.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-06/Investigacion/NotasSecundarias/Investigacion2702325.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-06/Investigacion/NotasSecundarias/Investigacion2702326.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-06/Investigacion/NotasSecundarias/Investigacion2702327.aspx>

VZCZCXYZ0016  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSJ #2373/01 2991829  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 261829Z OCT 06  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6439  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 002373

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN, DS/IP/WHA, AND INL/LP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: POLICE DIRECTOR RESIGNS, REPLACED BY PILOT

REF: SAN JOSE 2320

Classified By: Ambassador Mark Langdale for reason 1.4 (b&d).

11. (U) SUMMARY: On October 19, Police Director Osvaldo Alpizar Nunez resigned to face an investigation into charges he used official cellphones to make death threats against former policeman Alexis Ugalde. Alpizar is the first high-ranking official in the Ministry of Public Security to leave office since the Arias Administration came to power on May 8, 2006. Alpizar has been replaced by Oldemar Madrigal Medal, Director of the Air Surveillance Section--Costa Rica's version of an air force. Brief biographical details on Madrigal are at paragraph's four and five. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) Details of the scandal came to light in early October when results of an investigation by Judicial Police (OIJ) were leaked to the media. Threatening calls from two different official cell phones used by Alpizar were recorded beginning on May 10, 2006 -- just two days after Alpizar was sworn in. Later, a third cell phone registered to Alpizar's wife was also determined to have been used to make similar threats. Alpizar originally claimed to have lost the official cell phone related to the initial threatening calls, but when a second official phone and then a phone registered to his wife were also connected to the case, Alpizar asked for an indefinite leave without pay "in order to defend himself against unscrupulous charges." Security Minister Fernando Berrocal wasted no time in accepting the resignation.

13. (C) Vice Minister for Public Security Gerardo Lascarez recently told our DEA Chief that Alpizar should have been fired long ago for being "stupid and dishonest." Alpizar had little police experience (he was a policeman for almost nine months in 1994-1995 and rumor has it that he was fired from the OIJ for stealing gas). Alpizar apparently became known to Berrocal while Alpizar managed a private security company.

14. (U) Berrocal immediately appointed Air Surveillance Section Director Oldemar Madrigal to replace Alpizar. Madrigal began his off-and-on 23-year police career as a member of the Civil Guard in 1967. In 1969 he joined the air section as a policeman and then served as a radio operator at the Juan Santamaria Airport in San Jose. Madrigal obtained a pilot's license in 1974 and in 1978 left the air section to become ex-President Daniel Oduber's personal pilot. Madrigal flew for Chiquita Banana Corporation for 14 years and also flew Boeing 737's for Taca Airlines for seven years. During 1982-1989, Madrigal returned to the air section, serving as a flight instructor and rising to Deputy Director. From 1994-1998, Madrigal served as Director of the air section and returned to that post in January of 2005. Madrigal also spent two years as Technical Coordinator at the Directorate of Civil Aviation.

15. (SBU) Madrigal, age 57, has been married twice. He has four children. His current wife is 24-four years old, the same age as his youngest daughter by his first marriage. Madrigal has a two-year old daughter with his current wife.

16. (C) Madrigal told us that Berrocal had offered him the position of Police Director about a month ago but that he had respectfully declined. When the Alpizar scandal went public, Berrocal called again and this time gave Madrigal no choice. Madrigal hopes his stint as Police Director is temporary and will try to return to the air section. He has not formally resigned his position there, leaving instead his trusted and highly competent Operations Chief, Pablo Escobar, to manage until Madrigal can return. Rumor within the Ministry, however, suggests that Madrigal's appointment is permanent and that he will only be able to fly on his own (highly limited) time for the remainder of the Arias Administration. What is certain is that Berrocal has a very shallow pool of qualified professionals to pick from for these top-level jobs. His choices from outside that pool have already caused

him regret.

COMMENT

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17. (C) Madrigal is well-known to the Embassy and was ideally suited for his previous assignment. The pride and professionalism displayed by the air section is directly attributable to his leadership. While removing Alpizar is a welcome change, the politics of directing the national police force will wear on the technocratic Madrigal who may find himself stretched thin. Madrigal had no time to ease into his new position given the nationwide anti-CAFTA demonstrations October 23-24 (reftel) but the largely peaceful protests and the success of the police in keeping order got him off to a good start.

LANGDALE